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DARKCHYLDE
THE DIARY
QUEEN
GORDER

Image Comics and Majesty Graphics
presents

DARKCHYLDE™

"The Diary"

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"The Taunting" pgs 14-15

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"Overtaken" pgs 8-9
"The Watching" pgs 18-19

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"Familiar" pgs 10-11

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for image comics
Larry Marder
executive director
(and nicer than he has to be)

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I SHOULDN'T BE HERE.
AT LEAST, NOT ACCORDING TO THE SIGN, ANYWAY.
OUT
BUT IF YOU THINK I'M GONNA LET A RESTRICTION PUT UPON THE MOST GORGEOUS PLACE IN THIS GODFORSAKEN TOWN STOP ME, A RESTRICTION PUT UPON SIMPLY BECAUSE TWO LOCAL REDNECKS DECIDED TO GO BUNGEE JUMPING WITHOUT A BUNGEE, THEN YOU'RE AS CRAZY OR STUPID AS THEY WERE.
"CRAZY, OUT OF IT, GONE DOWN THE ROAD, WACKO." TO QUOTE MR. NICHOLSON FROM "CUCKOO'S NEST".

SO, BEING TRUE TO FORM AND LIVING UP TO THE "LOST GENERATION, RAISED ON MTV, WITH A DISDAIN FOR PRINCIPLES AND WITH NO RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY" QUOTE FROM THE LATEST ISSUE OF TV GUIDE, I ENTER THE ARENA ANYWAY, REGARDLESS OF THE POSTINGS.

WOULDN'T WANT TO DISAPPOINT TV GUIDE.

GOD FORBID.

AND GOD FORBID, I ACTUALLY FIND A BEAUTIFUL AND SERENE PLACE THAT I CAN ACTUALLY CALL MY OWN WITHOUT HAVING A GIANT FENCE AND A SIGN TELLING ME TO STAY THE HELL *OUT*.

I'D STAY THE HELL OUT OF THIS WHOLE GODDAMN TOWN OF *SALEM*, IF IT WERE UP TO ME. HOP ON THE NEXT BUS RIGHT BACK TO *FAIRFIELD*. RIGHT BACK TO WHAT'S LEFT OF WHAT I LEFT BEHIND.

WHICH, SAD TO SAY, ISN'T TERRIBLY MUCH, BUT IT WAS MORE THAN I HAVE HERE.

HERE IN SALEM.

MY FATHER IS SUCH A *JERK*. WITH ONLY THREE MONTHS LEFT TILL GRADUATION AT MY OLD SCHOOL, HE YANKS ME OUT.

"ARIEL, I KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO *HATE* ME, BABY, BUT..." HE BEGAN ONE NIGHT, WITH A HAZE OF ALCHOL STILL HUGGING HIS LIPS, AND WITH THAT STUPID, SMUG LOOK ON HIS FACE THAT I'D LOVE LIKE HELL TO MOP THE FLOOR WITH.

PROTESTS DIDN'T WORK. TEARS DIDN'T WORK. "YOU'LL MAKE FRIENDS," HE'D ALWAYS SAY.

YEAH, IT'S SOOOO EASY TO DO, ISN'T IT, ROBERT? HOW MANY FRIENDS DO *YOU* HAVE, YOU *FAT BASTARD*?

SOMETIMES IT SURPRISES ME, HOW MUCH VENOM I HAVE FESTERING INSIDE OF ME. IT DOES BOTHER ME, THOUGH. IT TRULY DOES. I'M NOT A BAD, OR MEAN PERSON. I KNOW I HAVE A GOOD HEART... A HEART I FEAR IS QUICKLY HARDENING INTO *CYNICISM*.

I MEAN, IT'S *HARD*. NO BOYFRIEND, AN ASSHOLE FOR A PARENT, NO LONG-TERM FRIENDS, A NEW SCHOOL AND NEW TOWN ALMOST EVERY EIGHT MONTHS WILL DO THAT TO YOU. TRY IT SOME TIME, YOU'LL AGREE WITH ME, I PROMISE.

BUT THAT'S WHY I COME HERE. DOWN TO THE RIVER. DOWN TO THE DAM WHERE THE SIGNS SAY I'M NOT *SUPPOSED* TO GO. DOWN WHERE THE SWEET SMELL OF HONEYSUCKLE IS THE STRONGEST, AND THE SOUND OF THE WATER WASHING OVER THE SPILLWAY IS THE LOUDEST.

TO THINK, TO BE ALONE. TO WRITE IN MY *DIARY* ABOUT HOW MISERABLE MY LIFE HAS BECOME, IN THE HOPES OF LOOKING BACK ON IT AND LAUGHING ABOUT HOW ROUGH I HAD IT YEARS FROM NOW.

TO TRY AND UNCAP THIS FESTERING BOIL OF RESENTMENT AND NEGATIVITY I HAVE WELLING UP INSIDE OF ME. JUST SPILL IT OUT ALL ON PAPER...

...BESIDES, IT'S CHEAPER THAN THERAPY.

Maybe if I can untie some of the knots I have inside the Nightmares will stop.

The Nightmares. I used to have them really bad when I was very small. Right after Mom went away. I was all of four. They've come back periodically over the years. I mean, we've all had bad dreams. But not like this. Never like they are now. Never more real. Never more alive. The Nightmares have come back to haunt me and they've never ever been worse...

not ever.

It almost always starts the same. I'm lost and alone in some pulsing, breathing obsidian landscape that looks like some leftover from an "Alien" set. Almost like the mind of Giger juiced up on crack sprawled out before me. It pulses. It breathes. Hell, it even whispers dark secrets, I somehow sense are important; but can never quite seem to make out.

And I'm almost always half naked. What's up with that? My friend Freud would probably say that it simply serves to illustrate my own deep seeded feelings of "exposed vulnerability." Vulnerability and helplessness. He'd be right. I usually feel both of those pretty strongly...

Every time I dream...

Then the landscape itself seems to shudder with the roar of some great beast. The air turns hot and acrid. Reality shifts and then the dragon shows up. Fang, he calls himself. Appropriate. Who am I to argue? That's usually the part where I pee in my bed.

Zaz

Waking up to that one.

And it's almost always after my bladder is relieved that the damn thing tells me not to be afraid.

That he won't let them hurt me and that he understands why I'm here. He says it bothers him that I'm a pawn in a much larger game. Having once been one himself. And what's even stranger, is that somehow I believe him.

Of course, things usually go south shortly thereafter. And regardless of Jana's promises they do get me. They do hurt me and their collective number and oppressive might pull me under. I feel despiration and rage upright inside of me as they pull me under. They only seem to feed off of it. It excites them. They want that devil in the darkness inside of me to be awakened.

They couldn't be happier as I drown in a sea of frustration and dispair. Their smiles run deep

They say that the memories of dreams, however vivid, fade with time.

But I can still see their gleaming smiles through the murkey water, sharp as razors.

TONY DANIEL © MARLO

Jimmy

And then salvation comes.
The reality of my dreamscape shifts again, and if I could ever possibly feel safe in such a place, I feel that wherever this thing, ...

This bird with all this light and energy, is around.

I feel comforted. It speaks to me without words, and talks to a place deep inside of me. The same place the others were trying to pull out of me. What is it? What could they want and why?

I don't know what it all means, but when this bird is around I feel a sort of hushed assurance. A promise from a long lost friend whose face I can't quite seem to recall. But she leaves me with good feelings, though...

Sometimes when so good I can sqeeuway seemlessly into a nicer place, a nicer dream not at all of that nightmare would I so frequntley visit. A better world.

A world where the temperature is a confortable 75 degrees and the water feels fantastic !!!

Hah!, These are the dreams I don't mind having!!!! (They should happen more often) I'm graduated, I'm finally 18, I've moved out away from asshole, I'm on my senior trip in Cancun!. What could be more perfect???? If Brad Pitt was there with me!!!

Hah! A girl can have atleast one cool dream, can't she? Even Ariel is intitled.

but of Course it never lasts and I'm right back to a darker more reality based scenario at my old school in Fairfield.

The same little play acts itself out whenever I go. And I feel just like a tired old marrionette, pulled by someone else's strings.

The girls never even give me a chance? Why won't they? If they would only TALK to me, only let me in, I could end up being their Best Friend

But it's always the same. They talk, they snicker. they call me "stuck up rich girl" and shrug their noses at me. I'd love to say it doesn't bother me, but it does.

It hurts.

CHANG '97

MARLO

Maybe if I could've gotten her in Salem earlier, I could've tried out for the Cheerleading team.

A sure fire way to be part of some sort of "IN" Crowd.

But even in Fairfield I could never bolster up the nerve to try out. I just don't have it in me to chew on my gum, smile stupidly at the lunkhead jocks and shout out banalities with any sort of conviction I'm much to sullen, I'm afraid. A "sullen girl" Cheerleader would would just never fly. Good as it looks on paper.

And why am I so sullen? I've gotten even more withdrawn and introverted lately...

"introverted" Now there's a scary word I never thought I'd apply to myself.

Back when I had friends we used to joke around about other people being withdrawn and quiet. (I know it's not cool, but I'm guilty. We're all done it — I'm HUMAN!)

And now here I am the "QUEEN OF THE WITHDRAWN" now, it seems. Funny. I guess that's Karma comin' back at ya!

Of course having a "DAD" with a growing disrespect for one's own privacy can certainly contribute to one feeling withdrawn, closed up, and guarded.

I've been trying to habitually lock my door but sometimes I forget. And even though it might just be my imagination, I swear even if I don't see him, I swear I can feel him looking at me.

I can feel his eyes on me. It makes me feel helpless. Exposed and vulnerable like in my dreams. Maybe that's it...

Maybe that could explain some of the nightmares. Maybe. But it leaves me feeling hurt and angry.

Mostly just angry.

And as much as I try to stay positive, all these negative feelings inside me continue to build. And my resentment grows every day....

Boiling beneath the surface...

Waiting to erupt.

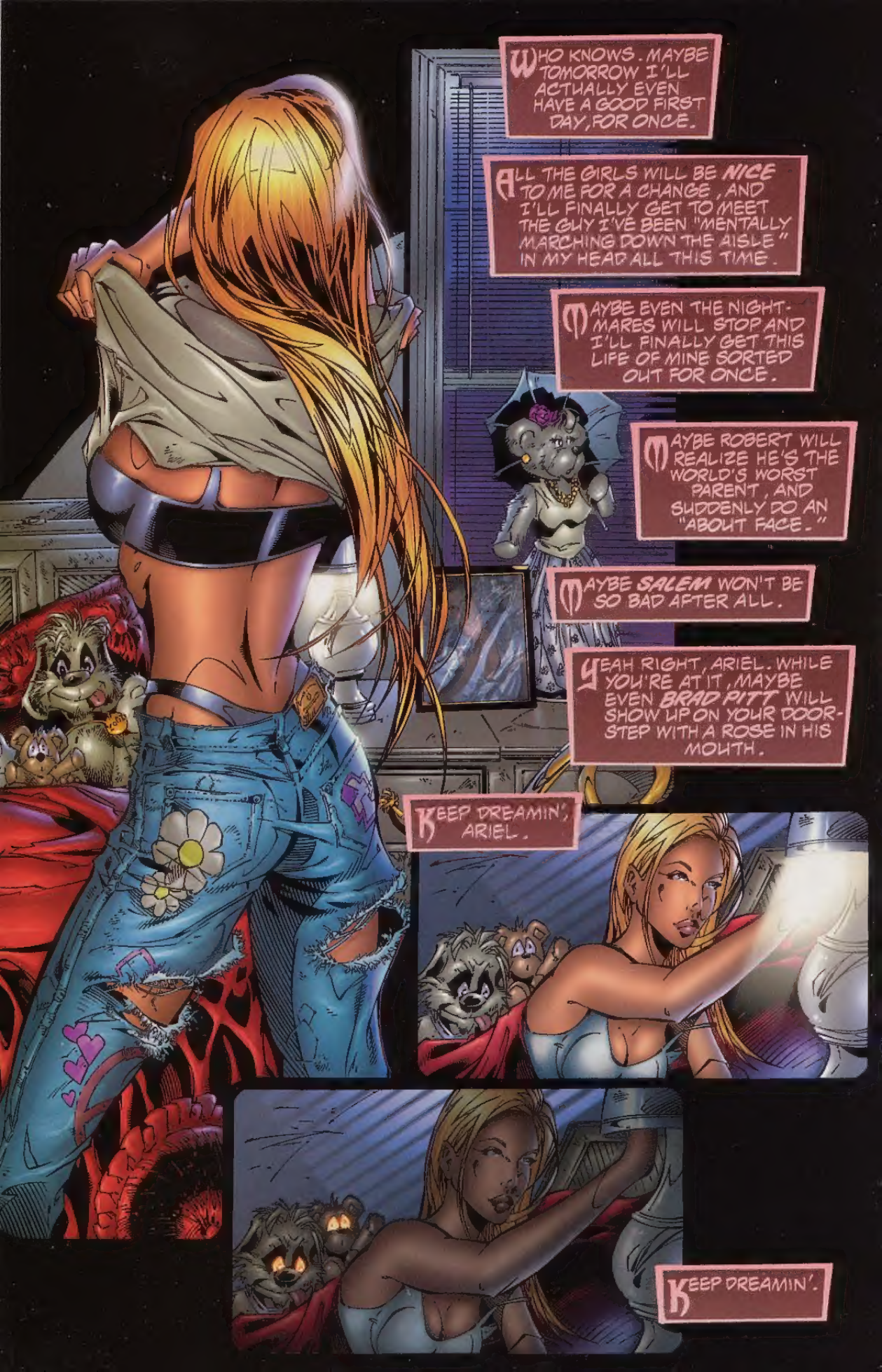
It's ten till ten.
Time to sign off and go to bed. Tomorrow's my first day at my new school ~ Salem High. And I need my beauty sleep. I want to be fresh and cheerful for all my new "friends to be."

HA! HA! I know better than that! The little girl with the open heart and beaming smile dares to rear

her ugly head again!
But I've been conditioned to think differently now.

Unfortunately.

But still, part of me still hopes. Maybe tonight I will actually get a good night's sleep. Maybe tonight my world won't slip away into shadow again where dragons dwell...


WHO KNOWS. MAYBE TOMORROW I'LL ACTUALLY EVEN HAVE A GOOD FIRST DAY, FOR ONCE.
ALL THE GIRLS WILL BE NICE TO ME FOR A CHANGE, AND I'LL FINALLY GET TO MEET THE GUY I'VE BEEN "MENTALLY MARCHING DOWN THE AISLE" IN MY HEAD ALL THIS TIME.
MAYBE EVEN THE NIGHT-MARES WILL STOP AND I'LL FINALLY GET THIS LIFE OF MINE SORTED OUT FOR ONCE.
MAYBE ROBERT WILL REALIZE HE'S THE WORLD'S WORST PARENT, AND SUDDENLY DO AN "ABOUT FACE."
MAYBE SALEM WON'T BE SO BAD AFTER ALL.
YEAH RIGHT, ARIEL. WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, MAYBE EVEN BRAD PITT WILL SHOW UP ON YOUR DOOR-STEP WITH A ROSE IN HIS MOUTH.
KEEP DREAMIN', ARIEL.
KEEP DREAMIN'.